Duping by Kuwaiti Agencies

3893. SHRI ABANI ROY:
SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have asked the Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry about the dubious manpower agencies, operating from Kuwait, which are duping unsuspecting young men in league with their agents in India;

(b) if so, whether several other manpowr agencies in Gulf countries are also duping the Indian and whether Government's request to blacklist such agencies has been honoured by them;

(c) if so, the facts and details thereof; and

(d) the steps taken by Government to check functioning of such agencies in league with their agents in India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) The Indian Embassy in Kuwait has formally brought to the notice of the Kuwaiti authorities the involvement of manpower agencies of Kuwait which recruit workers from India on false promises.

(b) and (c) Occasionally ther are reports from other Gulf countries where workers from India are recruited on false promises. Such cases are brought to the attention of the country concerned.

(d) During the year 2001 Government black listed 10 manpower agencies from Gulf countries. As regards recruiting agents in India show cause notices are issued to them and in case the reply is not found convincing, the licence of the recruiting agents is suspended/ cancelled.

Prime Minister's Visit to Singapore and Cambodia

3894. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will The Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister has visited Singapore and Cambodia in the month of April, 2002;

(b) if so, the purpose of the visit;

(c) to what extent the Prime Minister has been able to convince the Singapore and Cambodia to invest more in India;

(d) the agreements reached during his visit;

(e) to what extent both the countries have agreed to open the trade and investment in India; and

(f) whether the proposal of defence cooperation also figures during the discussion; and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The main objective of the visit was to renew ties of friendship and strengthen bilateral relations which exist between India and these two countries of South-East Asia, under the broad framework of India's "Look East" Policy, and also in view of the forthcoming India-ASEAN Summit which is taking place in Phnom Penhy in November this year.

(c) At high level talks with Prime Minister Goh Chik Tong of Singapore, PM underlined the potential of Foreign Direct Investment to India, and the new opportunities for foreign investors being opened in light of the new EXIM Policy facilitating foreign investment in India. Cambodia, being a developing country itself, does not have significant investible surpluses.

(d) The following agreements were signed during the visit.

Singapore:

(i) Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Republic of Singapore on Cooperation in the field of Telecommunications.

(ii) Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of India and Singapore on the Loan of Aritifacts to the Asian Civilizations Museum of Singapore.

Cambodia:

(i) Agreement for Conservation/Restoration of Ta Prom Temple, Siam Reap, Cambodia

(ii) Agreemen relating to Air Services

(iii) The Agreement on Visa Exemption for Diplomatic and Official passports holders.

(e) Singapore and Cambodia agree to further diversify and strengthen bilateral commercial relations.

(f) No, Sir.

Facilities to Hajis at Mecca

3895. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the facilities provided by Government to Hajis;

(b) whether it is a fact that there was no provision of lift for aged Hajis in Mecca where Hajis are housed, making life miserable for ageing pilgrims;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether in spite of Government's spending of Rs.150 crore subsidy as a magnanimous gesture to Hajis such kind of inconvenience is existing and similar reciprocation is not being made by Saudi Arabian Government; and

(e) whether Government would contact the Saudi Government to enter into a joint venture to improve the facilities to help Hajis from India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) In consultation with the Saudi Authorities, the Government of India provides assistance to Indian pilgrims during their stay in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as a welfare measure. For this purpose, the Government deploys a number of doctors, nurses and other